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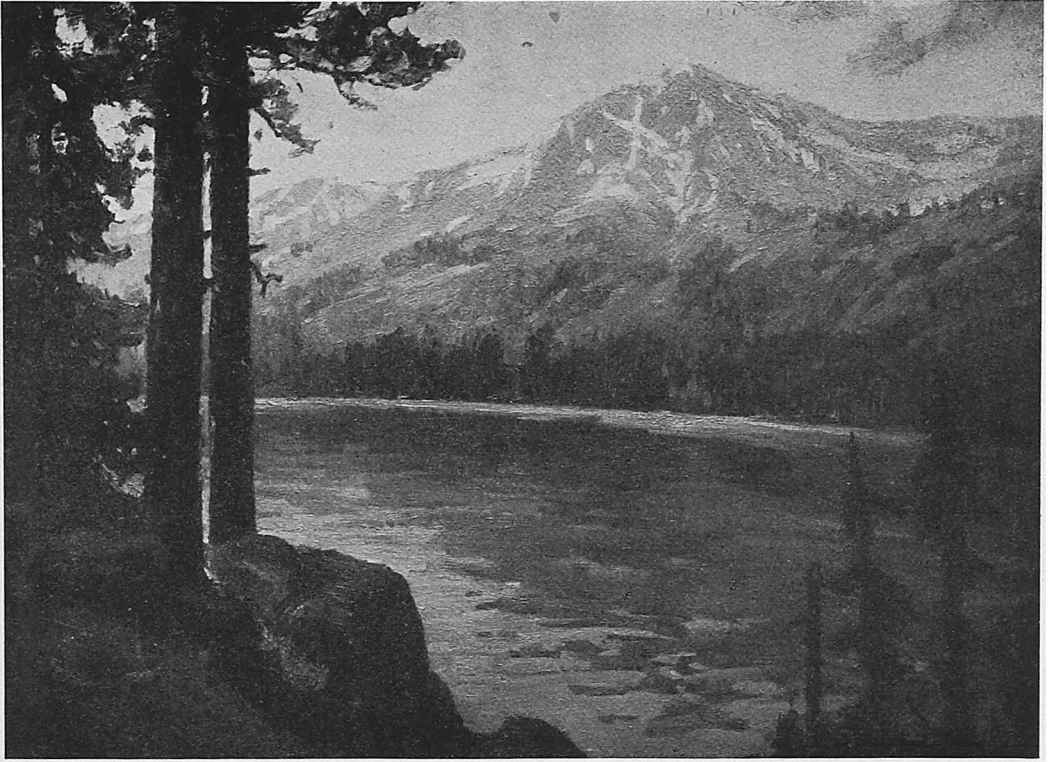
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*"THE MOUNTAIN OF THE CROSS—LAKE TAHOE"*  
*By Benjamin C. Brown*

## Exhibition California Art Club

By EVERETT C. MAXWELL

FROM a dozen different writers upon subjects pertaining to the development and trend of art in the west, the word has gone forth to the world that California, that land of golden light and purple shadows, is destined in the course of the next few years to give us a new school of landscape painting. Scarcely a day passes that we do not hear some enthusiast discourse upon the possibilities of the men and women who are devoting the best years of their lives to express upon canvas something of the rare quality of the western out-of-doors.

It would be a needless task at this time for me to go into a detailed account of what has already been accomplished or to predict the future as it appears to me. Art is a natural growth and must depend upon physical conditions just as surely as must the young plant or the infant child. Like the child and like the plant, a forced growth is never to be desired if strength and unity are the hoped-for result. The past five years have been telling ones in the development of the craft in the Southwest and few who understand conditions can dispute the fact that it is from this unique southwest that

the new growth in our art is taking definite form.

Southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico are the great unsettled melting-pot into whose seething cauldron a vast host of able workers from all points of America and Europe are gathered each season and slowly, but I believe surely, there is being fused a new and vigorous school of American landscape painting. Conditions seem right for a renaissance of art in California. We have the proper civilization, climatic conditions, and all that could be desired for self-expression in the realms of thought and beauty. If this art epoch of golden prophecy does not come to pass, it will not be the fault of the California Art Club which was organized three years ago by Mr. William Wendt, formerly of Chicago, but now the leading spirit in art and educational activities in Los Angeles.

Let me endeavor to bring into sharp relief the value of such a movement reflective of the combined efforts of our leading western painters along lines of constructive and esthetic betterment. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made in years past to maintain in the southwest a club of art workers that would contribute a solid standard to our fluctuating art progress on the coast. The struggle against commercialism and petty jealousy seemed too great for these previous movements and disaster attended their untimely ends. It would appear that the vital thing needed by our local art colony was a leader of strength and purpose and it fell to the lot of William Wendt to cement the straggling ranks into a combined energy and lead them forward to the goal of success. Despite the adverse criticism on the part of a few carping critics and a hoard of small-minded individuals, the California Art Club was organized along lines of unity and co-operation and has now lived for three abundant years of progress and usefulness. The position that

Mr. Wendt has filled was a difficult one and few men could have accomplished what he has done for art appreciation and educational advancement in so comparatively short a time.

The third annual exhibition of work by members of the California Art Club was held in Blanchard Gallery, Los Angeles, from November 18 to December 1, 1912, after which time it was transferred to San Francisco where it was shown for a fortnight under the auspices of the San Francisco Art Association. The yearly exhibitions of the California Art Club are the milestones of our western progress, the touchstones of our success in art. To be sure, a few of our good painters do not belong to the association, but one by one they are getting in line with this growing movement and the catalogue already includes a representative number.

Eighty-five canvases were hung in the exhibition under discussion representing thirty-one painters. With the opening of an exhibition of this nature the reviewer as well as the public is prone to be swayed by the dignity of an organized body of workers and in estimating the value of the products shown to be moved to extravagant expressions. Even those sane-minded people who criticize the critic cannot fail to coincide with the statement that the canvases shown at this time were by all odds the most uniform and withall the most comprehensive the club has yet offered upon the altar of public approval.

This exhibition is worthy national consideration for the simple reason that in a section so new to art endeavor as is this untamed southland, it is necessary to keep account of the work of such a force for artistic betterment as we find embodied in the California Art Club. This is the beginning of a time, and who dares declare that giant oaks have not been known to spring from very small acorns? We may scoff as much



*"THE VALLEY OF THE DELAWARE"*  
By Carleton T. Chapman

as we please regarding a school of typically western art, but, nevertheless, the fact still remains that our painters in this section are aiming in that direction as surely as the compass points. A careful study of this collection will prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. The stamp of the west is upon the work, even in the more halting renderings, of our newest men. The work of our native landscape painters is characterized by a rude strength and a telling originality that goes far to set it aside as a thing distinct and wholly worth while. Even though our young painters go East to study in ever increasing numbers, the most of our landscapists remain and it is in landscape that we have freest expression. It is a pleasure at this time to briefly note a few of the canvases that proved of interest to the re-

viewer. No doubt many will question the advisability of setting aside a given number of pictures for critical comment, but if the west is to measure up the eastern standards of art, it must perforce, accept eastern methods of criticism.

The two canvases by William Wendt, "Mt. San Antonio" and "The Golden Shore," were perhaps the most comprehensive in the collection. In the course of Mr. Wendt's several years' residence in the southwest we have seen this well trained painter develop from a literalist to a near-idealist and the transition has been a subtle but convincing one. At no time in Mr. Wendt's career, either past or to come, will he be other than a reasoning painter. That is to say, his temperament will never overbalance his brain. He knows his craft as do

few American painters and he bends it to fit every mood of nature. Of late years this process has become less studied, more spontaneous, and more easily accomplished and his work has gained perceptibly thereby. Even yet Mr. Wendt reasons with nature and his canvases are close chronicles of the argument.

In large measure the same may be said of the work of Gardner Symons, who was represented in this collection by a vital rendering of longshore seascape of bold conception and virile handling. It is interesting to compare "The Southern Sea" by this able painter with "The Golden Shore" by Wendt. Here are two men of equal strength offering two canvases much alike in subject and composition and both painted in the full color of western atmosphere. Wendt's canvas is a veil of soft glowing gold and gray while Symons' sees his rocks and sea in rich, cool tones of blues. Symons is a rare individualist. He is mannered to a degree of excellence that makes his work stand upon the value of its technical dexterity. He juggles paint as a trickster does his cards and coins, and the result leaves the beholder mystified and charmed.

Benjamin Chambers Brown is a colorist who never fails to strike a psychological note. His one offering to this exhibition, "The Mount of the Cross," while scenic in subject, is treated in a manner at once direct, sincere, and sympathetic.

Some of the pictures came from long distances. Ben Foster sent a well painted landscape, "Spring in New England," from New York, and Carl Oscar Borg, who is in Rome, contributed three water-colors, one of which breathes the very spirit of that poetic land.

The complaint cannot be raised any more that our artists "all paint alike." There was plenty of individuality in this exhibition. The modern impressionism of Helena Dunlap and Jack Gage Stark did not look amiss

in the collection. "Vanity" and "La Senirota," by Miss Dunlap, revealed this talented woman in the latest stage of her development and if we are not greatly mistaken the trend is strongly in the direction of the post-impressionistic movement. Detlef Sammann showed great improvement in his latest works over his spotty method of applying paint a year ago. "Weather Beaten," his most noteworthy offering, is full of good passages and is chiefly interesting for its movement and elemental force.

Jack Smith showed an excellent study of the cloister at Mission San Juan Capistrano. The well drawn perspective and poetic harmony of color that was strongly noted in this canvas made it worthy our consideration. "The Mill" by Sidney Dale Shaw was a successful experiment in pure color. It is extremely fine in tone and radiates with light and air.

Jean Mannheim's three large figure studies were a welcome variation from the surfeit of landscape renderings that always characterize a western salon. "Study of a Girl in White" was perhaps Mr. Mannheim's most notable offering. It is a difficult handling of an inert young woman dressed in white and posed against a white background. It is drawn with a sure hand and painted with the dash and freedom that make for big art.

Carlton F. Chapman was well represented by a solidly painted winter scene called "The Valley of the Delaware." The naked trees on the river bank in the middle distance were beautifully managed and the cold in the gray sky and clear winter atmosphere were well felt.

Hanson Puthuff may always be depended upon to paint a telling landscape. "Midsummer," a typical California foothill subject, represents this able painter at his best. It is easy in line, strongly modeled, and rich and glowing in color.

Julia Bracken Wendt showed a portrait

bust called "Blythe," a charming study of a child vigorously, yet sympathetically handled and remarkably life-like in feeling. Her medal for the Los Angeles Musical College in very low relief has grace of design and absolute fitness of subject.

The works mentioned are by no means all the fine things that were hung in this

collection. To do full justice to the exhibition I should have to follow this article with a second installment of equal length and that is impracticable at this season. There were many good pictures to be seen and a few almost great ones, and America may be proud of an organization of painters so unfailingly excellent.



*"PORTRAIT IN WHITE"*  
*By Jean Mannheim.*